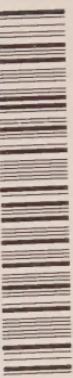


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SMOLLETT as *POET*

*Published on the Foundation
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of the Class of 1882, Yale College*



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S M O L L E T T
A S
P O E T

By HOWARD SWAZEY BUCK

Assistant Professor of English in
Yale University



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The present volume is the ninth work published by the Yale University Press on the Henry Weldon Barnes Memorial Publication Fund. This Foundation was established June 16, 1913, by a gift made to Yale University by the late William Henry Barnes, Esq., of Philadelphia, in memory of his son, a member of the Class of 1882, Yale College, who died December 3, 1882. While a student at Yale, Henry Weldon Barnes was greatly interested in the study of literature and in the literary activities of the college of his day, contributing articles to some of the undergraduate papers and serving on the editorial board of the *Yale Record*. It had been his hope and expectation that he might in after life devote himself to literary work. His untimely death prevented the realization of his hopes; but by the establishment of the Henry Weldon Barnes Memorial Publication Fund his name will nevertheless be forever associated with the cause of scholarship and letters which he planned to serve and which he loved so well.

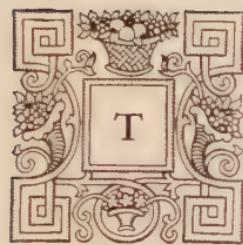
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To
JAMES THOMAS GIBBS

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P R E F A C E



HE present study is in no sense an attempt to rehabilitate Smollett as a poet. It has been undertaken partly in the belief that a closer scrutiny of Smollett's poems would yield at least some bibliographical and biographical facts of interest. In place of Seccombe's vague statement—typical of all comments on the question—that most of Smollett's poems "had probably appeared separately either in magazine or leaflet form" (before they were published in the first Collection of 1777), may now be substituted definite information as to when and where each known poem did appear. Smollett's authorship of the disputed posthumous *Ode to Independence* has, it is believed, been proved, together with the time of its composition. Twenty lines have been identified as a survival of his lost opera, *Alceste*; and three new poems, now first shown to be his, have been added to his slender sheaf of verse. The gathering of these facts has been only incidental, however, to the main purpose of this inquiry.

For the subject was more especially undertaken with the conviction that a fuller knowledge of these matters was indispensable to an understanding of Smollett the man and the novelist. For poetry was, in many respects, the sore point of his life. In the following pages, therefore, I have not confined myself to an examination of the verse-lines he wrote, but have tried, without writing a biography, to sketch the story of his poetic career against the general background of his life, especially in the early years. Finally, a relationship between his poetry and his novels is suggested as perhaps ultimately the chief significance of his efforts in this field.

To my own essay I have prefixed in full Smollett's most famous poem, *The Tears of Scotland*—in fairness both to the reader and to Smollett.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. Benjamin Nangle, of the Yale English Department, for the reading of the first line in my reconstructed "original" for Smollett's burlesque song in chapter LIII of *Roderick Random*. It is also a pleasure to record my thanks to Mr. George Washington for his preparation of the Index; to Mr. G. M. Troxell, of the Yale Library, for his reading of the proofs; and particularly to Professor C. B. Tinker for his examination of these pages in manuscript.

THE
TEARS OF SCOTLAND

Written in the year 1746

MOURN, hapless Caledonia, mourn
Thy banish'd peace, thy laurels torn!
Thy sons, for valour long renown'd,
Lie slaughter'd on their native ground;
Thy hospitable roofs no more
Invite the stranger to the door;
In smoky ruins sunk they lie,
The monuments of cruelty.

The wretched owner sees afar
His all become the prey of war;
Bethinks him of his babes and wife,
Then smites his breast and curses life.
Thy swains are famish'd on the rocks,
Where once they fed their wanton flocks;
Thy ravish'd virgins shriek in vain;
Thy infants perish on the plain.

What boots it then, in every clime,
Through the wide spreading waste of time,
Thy martial glory, crown'd with praise,
Still shone with undiminish'd blaze?
Thy tow'ring spirit now is broke,
Thy neck is bended to the yoke.
What foreign arms could never quell,
By civil rage and rancour fell.

The rural pipe and merry lay
No more shall cheer the happy day;
No social scenes of gay delight
Beguile the dreary winter night;
No strains but those of sorrow flow,
And nought be heard but sounds of woe,
While the pale phantoms of the slain
Glide nightly o'er the silent plain.

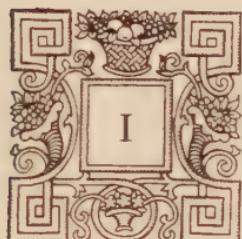
O baneful cause, oh! fatal morn,
Accurs'd to ages yet unborn!
The sons against their father stood,
The parent shed his children's blood.
Yet, when the rage of battle ceas'd
The victor's soul was not appeas'd;
The naked and forlorn must feel
Devouring flames, and murd'ring steel!

The pious mother, doom'd to death,
Forsaken, wanders o'er the heath;
The bleak wind whistles round her head,
Her helpless orphans cry for bread;
Bereft of shelter, food, and friend,
She views the shades of night descend;
And stretch'd beneath th' inclement skies,
Weeps o'er her tender babes, and dies.

While the warm blood bedews my veins,
And unimpair'd remembrance reigns,
Resentment of my country's fate
Within my filial breast shall beat;

And, spite of her insulting foe,
My sympathizing verse shall flow:
“Mourn, hapless Caledonia, mourn
Thy banish’d peace, thy laurels torn.”

S M O L L E T T
AS
POET



N 1774, three years after Smollett's quiet burial in Leghorn, Italy, a Tuscan column was raised to his memory on the banks of the Leven, in Scotland, near the house where he had been born fifty-three years before. The Latin inscription was revised in part by Dr. Johnson, when he and Boswell spent a night with James Smollett of Bonhill on their return from the Hebrides. The inscription speaks of this column as "erected on the banks of the Leven, the scene of his birth and of his latest poetry." The latter reference is of course to the familiar and touching incident in *Humphry Clincker* where the testy old Matthew Bramble, passing near this "Arcadia of Scotland," as he is made to call it, sends his correspondent "the copy of a little ode to this river, by Dr. Smollett, who was born on the banks of it, within two miles of the place where I am now writing." These verses to the Leven-Water of his boyhood, the last poem Smollett is known to have written, may still be met with, in part, in the *Oxford Book of Verse*. They revert tenderly to those early days when his Muse

was warmest and quickest, before other interests divided and then virtually absorbed his attention. In discussing Smollett's poetry, it is therefore especially necessary to focus these early days clearly, even though no actual verses survive from them; and the reader will perhaps pardon me for consequently retreading at first sufficiently familiar paths, in order to point out certain things essential to our story.

Birthplace & Early Days

LEVEN-WATER is the river which, forming the outlet to Loch Lomond and thus "devolving from its parent lake" through some six miles of beautiful valley, empties into the Clyde under the very shadow of Dumbarton Castle, that "arx inexpugnabilis" of song and story. In this valley of the Leven people of the name of Smollett had lived since the latter part of the fifteenth century, merchanning in Dumbarton, victualling the King's ships, intermarrying with the minor gentry of the country, and eventually, in the person of the novelist's grandfather, achieving knighthood. Smollett's grandfather was Sir James Smollett of Bonhill, originally a commissary judge, and now become the most considerable property owner in the valley,

of which he seems to have been the somewhat dour dictator. Smollett's father, Archibald Smollett, Sir James's youngest son, had made the double mistake first of turning out sickly and then, with no visible prospects of support, of marrying for love without consulting anybody. The recurrent theme in his son's novels of the hard-hearted parent and the down-trodden younger generation, is undoubtedly a filial reflection, characteristically exaggerated and distorted, of his father's situation. That Sir James remained stern and unmollified to the end is plain from his passing over Archibald in his will made in 1721, even though at that time his sole surviving son; yet it is also plain that he never really washed his hands of the affair. The young couple were settled in a house at Dalquhurn, about a mile down the river; and when Archibald, after presenting the estate with three children, improvidently died, his widow and her little brood were left in undisturbed possession, and definitely helped out at the rate of twenty-two pounds per annum.

Such was the situation into which the young Tobias had been born. That he and his brother “paidled in the limpid Leven”—

Pure stream, in whose transparent wave
My youthful limbs I wont to lave;

that he spent many a happy hour in pursuing “the ruthless pike,” “the silver eel, and mottled par,” we have this ode as definite testimony. That he

also went barefooted and bareheaded in summer, knew little diet beyond oatmeal, drove the farm horses to water, listened to old servants' stories of the lawless Macgregors, as Mr. Chambers in his delightful account surmises, is no doubt equally true. These are doubtless the facts; yet I believe it is a serious mistake to read them (strong as the temptation must be) in the spirit of Smollett's swan-song, lines written upon revisiting the Yarrow of his childhood, in which, as one of his earliest commentators remarks, "he celebrates his native stream with all the elegant simplicity of an Arcadian shepherd." That the valley of the Leven then appeared as an Arcadia to the young Smollett seems to me highly doubtful. And though I have no desire to darken the picture of what must have been essentially a healthy and happy boyhood, I believe it is a palpable error not to envisage this family situation as showing him, almost from the start, a kind of natural heir to disapproval, grating dependence, and that sense of ill-usage and injustice which he so long cherished as the exquisite viper of his bosom.

In fact, the strain declared itself almost immediately. In the grammar school at Dumbarton, some two miles down the river, whither Tobias was sent to be under the competent care of Mr. John Love, he distinguished himself by an early propensity for satire in the form of uncomplimentary verses on his schoolfellows. Little boys, however, are not easily

downed by verses; and we may be sure there was both give and take. If the common lot of them were less linguistically gifted than this young colt from Dalquhurn, was there not a sweet, almost mono-syllabic rejoinder ready to hand? Throughout his life Smollett exhibited a known sensitiveness to the nickname Toby—which provided his enemy, Dr. Grainger, with such a noble opening. Obviously, such antipathies as this are not the products of mature life. And as one recalls, in *Peregrine Pickle*, Commodore Trunnion's Christian name, let fall upon a single occasion—"Tobiah"—one wonders if his ear does not catch a far refrain, sung "with variations," by the little voices of Dumbarton.

But if Smollett early displayed a childish satiric turn, tradition also records the stirrings of a nobler spirit. We are told that his youthful Muse celebrated the virtues of Sir William Wallace. Nor was this strange, since ever before his eyes was the great rock of Dumbarton, with its twin peaks and castled towers, so often the hero's refuge and at last his dungeon. His sword was still kept there as a sacred relic. His story was naturally peculiarly current in that locality. The textbook used in most Scottish schools, and certainly in Mr. Love's, was the Latin *History of Scotland* by Buchanan, himself a native of Dumbarton, and indeed supposed to have been a graduate of this very school. Buchanan's account of the assassination of James I of

Scotland is recognizably the source of Smollett's *Regicide*, the luckless tragedy written a few years later in Glasgow. The verses on Wallace, like all these *juvenilia*, are lost; but if we may judge from the tragic "oh's" and "ah's" of *The Regicide*, they were done with sufficient heroic ardor. The heroics could not in themselves be of much importance to us; but their early appearance is not only pleasant, but I believe we shall find it of some significance.

The eulogist of Wallace, however, did not intend to limit himself to the pen. We are informed that he expressed a strong desire to enter the army. Though this cannot be regarded as an uncommon wish at such periods of life, it seems to have been a little more than the usual desire of any normal boy to be a fireman: if he did not, like his older brother (later lost on a transport wrecked on the coast of America), actually enter the army, being prudently dissuaded therefrom by his elders, nevertheless within a year of "leaving home" he had harkened to the siren call (whatever its form then was) of "Join the Navy and See the World." Though his enlisting in the naval expedition bound for the West Indies was no doubt primarily due to acute want of cash, I believe—looking at his career more broadly—there was a measurable degree of questing independence in this adventure from which he returned with a first-hand knowledge of the sea (then absolutely unique as literary equipment) and a Creole wife.

To return, however, to the earlier days. In due course he left the grammar school at Dumbarton, and removed to Glasgow, where we find him apprenticed to Mr. John Gordon, medical practitioner, and at the same time attending appropriate courses in the university. The influence of his medical profession upon Smollett's literary development is of course well-nigh incalculable; nor is it anywhere plainer than in some of his earliest published poetry.

The traditional account of how Smollett came to take this important step is suggestive. According to Moore and Anderson, Smollett was sent to Glasgow with no definite aim beyond putting himself in the way of the larger opportunities offered by such a place—a version which, if true, is only one of a number of pieces of evidence showing (despite Smollett's characteristic feelings to the contrary) that his relatives really tried to give him his chance. Anderson tells us, however, that, once there, "he formed an intimacy with some students of medicine, which, more than any predilection for the subject, determined him to embrace the profession of physique, and, by the advice of his relations, he was put apprentice to Mr. John Gordon." It has since been ascertained, however, that James Smollett of Bonhill had had dealings with Mr. Gordon for some time; and though this does not prove that the family's appeal to him may not have come after the boy had expressed a desire to

cast in his lot with his new medico friends, it has been rather plausibly suggested that he was sent to Glasgow not to profit vaguely by the larger opportunities of that place but expressly for this apprenticeship—the family thus putting him in the way of preparing himself for one of the learned professions in lieu of entering the army. In either case, however, it appears that Smollett did not feel particularly drawn to the medical profession itself—for which he was in some ways so singularly ill-adapted. On the other hand, his finding the society of the young medical students of Glasgow so fascinating—whether this was the cause or merely a reward of his choice of career—is equally illuminating on the other side.

Two vividly living glimpses have come down to us of Smollett as the Glasgow apprentice. One is the well-known anecdote regarding his snowballing prowess, which Dr. Moore, Smollett's friend and biographer, selected (apparently from many more) as one which he *would* "risk mentioning"! The other testifies to the same general type of activity, with the addition of an unfortunately all-too vivid touch as to his personal appearance. I quote from Chambers's account: "Some friends of Dr. Gordon . . . were one day placing the unlucky misdoings of Smollett in unfavourable contrast with the quiet decorum of *their* pupils, when Gordon told them: 'It may be very true; but give me, before them all, *my ain bubbly-nosed callant*,

with the stane in his pouch.” A companion at this time reports that “his conversation was one continued string of epigrammatic sarcasms against one or other of the company, for which no talents could compensate.” The dislike glowering behind this comment was not unique—we know that at times it took a more active form than mere comments. As lately as 1918 an autograph manuscript, dated November 24, 1735, and inscribed “Tobie Smalet,” was seen, sold, and has since (for the time being, at least) completely disappeared. This is the earliest known manuscript of any kind by Smollett—he was then only fourteen—and is presumably still in existence. It is described in *Autograph Prices Current* (1917-1918, p. 217) as being in the form of twenty-two lines of verses addressed to J. Armstrong, a fellow student at Glasgow, and appealing for “protection from indignities inflicted upon the writer by other students.” Already “Tobie” is well versed in the gentle art of making enemies. Yet, as we can see from the other records of this period, he was quite able to take care of himself. In fact, he wrote many other verses which were scarcely in the nature of “appeals.” Some (according to a tradition still, in the main, reliable) were directed against his more well-to-do cousins who had got him into this position; others, against his master, Mr. Gordon, who could speak so kindly of him, and who was further rewarded by being not improbably (despite the protests of biographers and

the fact of having amicably written his former pupil at least once in the meantime) caricatured as Potion in Smollett's first novel, and finally (and equally characteristically) eulogized in his last. That these lampoons were more than mere playful literary snowballs (however painful to the recipient), but were in the nature of trial-flights by one definitely conscious of literary ambitions, is shown by the fact that they were extended beyond his own circle of acquaintance to attack some of the more general assemblies and vices of the city. Indeed, though presumably circulated only in manuscript—a much commoner and more effective medium then than now—they apparently achieved some local vogue, for Dr. Moore tells us they gave offense to serious-minded citizens. The local success of these lost *Advices* and *Reproofs* helps to explain the overweening confidence with which the young man, upon finishing his apprenticeship in Glasgow, promptly looked about for new worlds to conquer.

Before setting out for London, however, he had completed *The Regicide*, his blank-verse tragedy on the murder of James I of Scotland. It is difficult to picture the youthful lampoonist and conversational terrorist, the dirty if resourceful apprentice with his medical school cronies, as the bard of Eleanora, that "bleeding fair," the virtuous Dunbar, the villain Grime—"outrageous wretch" or (in the moment of triumph) "grimly smiling

Grime"—and the rest. Their story seems to have no root whatever in the life of those Glasgow days—or any other life, for that matter, which is of course but one of its trifling drawbacks. And yet as one recalls Buchanan's history-book—Sir William Wallace—the longing to go a-soldiering—and a certain spirit of proud independence regardless of costs which never left the hardened literary warrior—one may view a little more indulgently his clinging to this tragedy of Scotland's poet-king with a faith that is rather more pathetic than ludicrous.

London: the First Year

AT all events, to London he went at the age of eighteen, with a little money, his tragedy, and numerous letters of recommendation. It is not our purpose here to trace in detail the story of *The Regicide*; yet its general trend is indispensable to an understanding of this period, for in it is written, with almost unparalleled painfulness, the shock of disillusionment. For ten years this tragedy, mercilessly torn to pieces and revised—once so radically as to make it conform suddenly to the classical unities—was pushed from pillar to post, until finally, following the sweeping suc-

cess of *Roderick Random*, it was published by subscription, defiantly labelled "by the author of *Roderick Random*." Throughout this Iliad of woes, Smollett appears as an incredibly persistent young man, infuriated by plain speaking, yet incapable of taking a hint; and though we are painfully aware of his very real and deep sufferings, it must be confessed that our sympathies for the most part are with the managers and actors trying to deal with him.

At first all had gone well, the outposts being carried with gratifying celerity. Within a few weeks of his arrival in London he had acquired (perhaps through one of his letters of recommendation) a patron for himself and his tragedy. But as the months wore on, and nothing happened, and he was not so much as introduced to a manager, he resolved that such "barbarous indifference" should be punished—and peremptorily discarded his patron! Which was all very well; but how was he to live? To be sure, there were still the mortar and the pestle to fall back upon. But it is fairly plain from his leaving Glasgow so promptly upon the expiration of his apprenticeship, and from his whole behavior with the MS. of *The Regicide*, that he came up to London with the secret resolution (whatever his announced intentions may have been) of making his way in the literary world. Surely the failure of one patron must not be taken as final! There are other good fish in the sea. Be-

sides, be it known that heroic tragedies are not the only things we can write, or have written! Melopoyn, in his account of these doings in *Roderick Random*, tells of the shifts to which he was early reduced in trying to advance his tragedy—alias, *The Regicide*. In his predicament he received knowing advice from a reverent-haired gentleman to the effect that he might do well with something luscious—*Shockey and Towzer*, for instance—a form of prostitution at first indignantly spurned by the tragic poet. He was then told “a volume of prose adventures,” such as those of Robinson Crusoe or Colonel Jack, might do; or even “a collection of conundrums, wherewith to entertain the plantations.” Being at that time unprovided with either of these commodities, and presently spurned as a translator (in which capacity he offered himself), he at length bethought him of the “printers of halfpenny ballads, and other such occasional essays as are hawked about the streets.” Accordingly, he applied to one of these, and, after some false steps—rectified when the “pretty sort of ode” he had composed on the spot was duly vulgarized to order—he met with grudging encouragement, and was regularly taken on. “From that day,” he writes, “I studied the Grub-street manner with great diligence, and at length became such a proficient, that my works were in great request among the most polite of the chairmen, draymen, hackney coachmen, foot-

men, and servant maids. Nay, I have enjoyed the pleasure of seeing my productions adorned with cuts, pasted upon the wall as ornaments in beer cellars and cobblers' stalls, and have actually heard them sung in clubs of substantial tradesmen. But empty praise, you know, my dear friend, will not supply the cravings of nature. I found myself in danger of starving in the midst of all my fame." I do not wish to press the application of this to Smollett too narrowly. Doubtless what Smollett in after life wrote his American correspondent about the reputed autobiography of Roderick's adventures, especially on the road up to London, applies in a measure here too: "The low situations in which I have exhibited Roderick, I never experienced in my own person." Yet the autobiographic value of the inserted story of Melopoyn and his tragedy, often down to minute particulars, is beyond dispute; and there seems to me much inherent probability in its account of such a plunge into the more sordid Grub-street world before falling back on medicine and His Majesty's Navy. It is true Smollett cannot have found himself utterly without friends upon his arrival in London—witness the plentiful supply of letters of introduction, which Moore dryly suggests was perhaps designed to make up for the very limited supply of funds. Still, the first year is the hardest; letters of introduction are not always productive of practical assistance; and though we may believe that Smollett

was not without true friends, the fact remains that we know nothing whatever about *any* friends at this period. That he must have been financially *in extremis* before sailing with the Fleet, seems obvious; that, prior to this, with his slender resources either ebbing or ebbed, and things going unaccountably badly with *The Regicide*, he should have turned to Grub-street, before falling back on medicine after all, seems nearly inevitable. Had he not, only yesterday, as it were, proved his prowess in this field by setting the good people of Glasgow by the ears? Could the author of *The Regicide*, great and neglected genius as he undoubtedly was, afford to make dainty of a talent so tried and true? Smollett's peculiar gusto and equipment for such work are of course obvious on every score; and on the basis of this episode in Melopoyn's story, supported by not a little circumstantial probability, we should perhaps add to the lost verses of his Dumbarton and Glasgow days a lost body of Grub-street ballads and the like, the products of his first year in London before shipping with the expedition from which he returned not only wiser but at least relatively more prosperous. Could these verses now be retrieved and identified, they would be worth all his "Songs to Celia."

*Return from Jamaica:
The Tears of Scotland*

RETURNING from the West Indies late in 1742 or early in 1743, Smollett probably continued his practice as “surgeon” in a desultory way; but his chief hopes were still pinned to *The Regicide*. The dust of two years was blown off; the manuscript placed in the hands of the suave Mr. Fleetwood of Drury Lane; and the author ravished with soft whispers of success. However, again nothing happened; and when this phase was succeeded by a still more humiliating experience, when the pages of his masterpiece were rescued by the merest chance from his patron’s house—in fact, “from the most dishonorable apartment of his lordship’s house”—the outraged author flung his play aside in disgust. And here we verily believe the poor man tried to forget the whole unhappy business. For he made a rather determined effort to establish himself decently in his profession, settling in a neighborhood of some consequence then as now, as “Mr. Smollett, Surgeon, Downing street, West.” And not a word of *The Regicide* for almost two years! But a change of managers at Drury Lane in 1745 was too great a temptation: the luckless manuscript was dragged from its hiding place,

thoroughly revised, and a new series of disasters, which it is not necessary to trace, inaugurated. During these trying years we catch occasional and not unfriendly glimpses of Smollett and his precarious existence from Dr. Alexander Carlyle and others.

Dr. Carlyle was with Smollett when the news of the Highlanders' defeat at Culloden Moor in April, 1746, reached London. He told the story many years later in his *Memoirs*: "I was in the coffee-house with Smollett," runs his account, "when the news of the Battle of Culloden arrived, and when London all over was in a perfect uproar of joy. . . . About nine o'clock I wished to go home to Lyons in New Bond street. . . . I asked Smollett if he was ready to go, as he lived in May Fair; he said he was and would conduct me. The mob was riotous, and the squibs so numerous and incessant that we were glad to go into a narrow entry to put our wigs into our pockets and to take our swords from our belts and to walk with them in our hands, as everybody then wore swords; and after cautioning me against speaking a word lest the mob should discover my country and become insolent, 'for John Bull,' says he, 'is as haughty and valiant to-night as he was abject and cowardly on the black Wednesday when the Highlanders were at Derby.' After we got to the head of the Haymarket, through incessant fire, the doctor led me by narrow lanes, where we met nobody but a few boys at a pitiful bonfire, who very civilly asked

us for sixpence, which I gave them. I saw not Smollett again for some time after, when he showed Smith and me the manuscript of his *Tears of Scotland*, which was published not long after and had such a run of approbation." It was not the issue of the conflict which stirred Smollett—for he was never a Jacobite—but the atrocities with which "Butcher" Cumberland was rumored to have followed up his victory. The rumors were believed by Smollett—the result being the passionate protest of this, his most famous poem—

Mourn, hapless Caledonia, mourn
Thy banish'd peace, thy laurels torn, etc.

One of the best-known anecdotes of his biography is Graham of Gartmore's story (on the authority of an eyewitness) of how the last stanza was added. One evening at a tavern, while some of his friends were playing cards, Smollett was busy in a corner. One of the friends, suspecting he was writing verses, asked if it was not so. The first draft of the poem was then produced, consisting of only six stanzas. His friends remonstrated on the dangerous warmth of such sentiments—whereupon he turned from them indignantly, and added the final stanza:

While the warm blood bedews my veins,
And unimpair'd remembrance reigns,
Resentment of my country's fate
Within my filial breast shall beat;

And, spite of her insulting foe,
My sympathizing verse shall flow:
“Mourn, hapless Caledonia, mourn
Thy banish’d peace, thy laurels torn.”

Here, to the life, is that spirit of independence in the scorn of consequence which was the ruling passion of Smollett’s life. And if it was a virtue which perhaps more than any of his vices made him a peculiarly difficult man, we cannot help respecting it, for all that.

Plainly, no real doubt exists as to the approximate date of the composition of *The Tears of Scotland*; yet wide doubt has surrounded the date of its publication. Early commentators are carefully guarded in their statements. Moore and Anderson both speak of Smollett’s being cautioned against “giving any more copies of his ode”—obviously implying, though not stating, that the copies were in manuscript. Chalmers says the poem does not appear to have been published for many years—“with his name.” The reader, however, will recall Dr. Carlyle’s vivid account of receiving the news of Culloden in Smollett’s company, parting from him that night, and especially the sequel: “I saw not Smollett again for some time after, when he showed Smith and me the manuscript of his *Tears of Scotland*, which was published not long after, and had such a run of approbation.” This, be it noted, is the nearest thing we possess to a

first-hand statement on the point; and though it is impossible to gauge precisely the time intended to be loosely covered by such terms as "not long after," etc., it would seem safe to say that, according to Dr. Carlyle's recollection, the interval between composition and publication was a matter of months, not years. The date of Culloden was April 16, 1746, and Seccombe, on the basis of this statement, supported by another bit of evidence to be mentioned in a moment, is of opinion that the poem "was almost certainly published in a separate form during the summer of 1746, though we first know of it in *A Collection of the most esteemed pieces of Poetry that have appeared for several years* (London, 1767)."

The latter statement as to our earliest knowledge of the poem is widely erroneous. The poem appeared anonymously fourteen years before this in a collection edited by Thomas Warton called *The Union: or Select Scots and English Poems*, Edinburgh, 1753. In the same collection, the *Love Elegy* (i.e., the Imitation of Tibullus in *Roderick Random*) was also included—by "Mr. Smallet." In the second edition of the *Union* (1759) the ode is still anonymous. In the third edition (1766) it appears with Smollett's name. This persistent anonymity, even in a collection which from the first included Smollett's name, lends some color to the anxiety of his friends over the warmth of senti-

ment expressed in the poem. Its appearing in Edinburgh is also perhaps of interest.

But this was not the first appearance of the poem. The stanzas as printed in the *Union* are in all respects the standard version. The Harvard Library, however, possesses a copy of the poem in leaflet form—four pages—unhappily lacking the title-page and badly cut down, the text of which is not the standard version. The collation is brief enough to be given here in full: In the second line of the refrain as it appears both in the first and last stanzas we read “Thy banish’d Peace, thy laurel torn,” instead of the present plural “laurels torn”; in the second stanza, “Where late they fed their wanton flocks,” for the present “Where once they fed,” etc.; in the third stanza, “What boots it, that, in ev’ry clime,” for the present “What boots it then, in ev’ry clime”; in the fifth stanza, “O baleful cause,” for the present “O baneful cause,” and “The sons against their Fathers stood,” for the present “their Father stood”; in the sixth stanza, “The bleak wind whistles o’er her head,” for the present “round her head”; also “And stretch’d beneath inclement skies,” for the present “beneath th’ inclement skies”; and in the last stanza, “In spite of her insulting foe,” for the present “And, spite of her,” etc. These variations prove that the leaflet is an earlier version of the poem, the standard version improving upon it (as examination of contexts will show) in point of clearer connectives

and avoidance of awkward repetition. Was this the first edition of the poem, which, according to Dr. Carlyle's recollection, should be dated sometime in 1746? If not actually the first edition, it is obviously a very early one. But before drawing any conclusion here, we should consider one other factor.

The leaflet in the Harvard Library lacks the title-page, and with it of course the date, but the first page of the text gives the title in the standard form, *The Tears of Scotland*. Long ago Robert Chambers in his Memoir of Smollett called attention to an item in the Catalogue of Books in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July, 1746—"The *Groans of Scotland*. 6 d. Cooper"—and asked "Was this Smollett's poem?" Seccombe, bearing in mind Carlyle's account, but being himself avowedly ignorant of any text prior to 1767, evidently believed it was. And on the whole I am still inclined to agree. To be sure, against the assignment may be urged the fact that the entry in the Catalogue of Books is not under the section headed *Poetry* but under *Miscellaneous*. Moreover, we should remember that the subject was very generally exercising the public conscience; Smollett's was not a voice crying in the wilderness. On the other hand, in favor of the assignment, we note with Seccombe that publication in July would accord with Dr. Carlyle's general recollection. Furthermore, the price of sixpence looks right; and

finally, as regards the title, surely one can scarcely resist the conviction that *The Groans of Scotland* was a first form, later so slightly and naturally modified into *The Tears of Scotland*. I believe, then, that *The Groans of Scotland* was probably the earliest form of the poem, while the Harvard leaflet represents a closely subsequent, intermediate version, with title revised, but not the text—at least not finally. These earlier versions would in themselves better constitute that “run of approbation” which all unite in saying immediately greeted the poem, and which has never sounded quite right applied to a poem supposed to be at that time only in manuscript.

If this reasoning is correct, *The Tears of Scotland*, under its earlier title, must be set down as Smollett's earliest known publication, and not *Advice*, the satire published the next month. The general probability of this will be increasingly apparent, I believe, as we proceed. For (apart from the question of exact precedence in publication) there is not the slightest doubt that it was through the ringing protest of this lyric that Smollett first caught the attention of his age. The hour had been a burning one—and Smollett's lyric was written at white heat. Even now it yields to no poem of the time in point of real fervor. Amid the exciting emotions of the day it must have seemed little short of a great poem. Testimony as to the warmth of its reception on all hands is unanimous. In par-

ticular, it attracted the attention of Lord Chesterfield. Chesterfield left Ireland for England on April 22, 1746—less than a week after the Battle of Culloden. He must have landed while the country was still seething with excitement over the news. In the Preface to *The Regicide*, Smollett tells how, in the spring of 1746, his play had acquired “the approbation of an eminent wit, who proposed a few amendments, and recommended it to a person, by whose influence I laid my account with seeing it appear at last.” The eminent wit was Lord Chesterfield, and the person of influence Garrick, to whom Chesterfield in fact sent the manuscript of *The Regicide*. In a long passage in *Peregrine Pickle* Smollett asserts that his acquaintance was first courted by Chesterfield “in consequence of a production” which he had “ushered into the world with universal applause”—that is, before the spring of 1746. In dealing with these matters in my *Study in Smollett*, before I had sufficiently considered *The Tears of Scotland*, I judged that the admired production could only have been Smollett’s *Advice* (hitherto regarded as his earliest publication). As I then noted, however, there was a discrepancy in dates; for this satire was not published till August—yet it was in the previous spring that Chesterfield had undertaken to sponsor *The Regicide*—and this “*in consequence of*” the admired production. It now seems clear to me that the production “ushered into the world with universal ap-

plause," which first attracted Chesterfield's notice some time prior to the spring of 1746, was unquestionably the poem we know as *The Tears of Scotland*. On this hypothesis, the above discrepancy in dates is obviated; the "universal applause" is indubitable; and there is a great deal more general probability in Chesterfield's seeking to patronize the author of a spirited and popular poem than the author of an all but blackmailing satire like *Advice*. The earliest possible date for the publication of *The Tears of Scotland*, however, is July, 1746. Therefore, if the above be true, Chesterfield must have seen the poem in manuscript. This is borne out by the passage in *Peregrine Pickle*, which specifically refers to his Lordship's "having seen your performance in manuscript." Thus it appears that, prior to publication, the poem was in fact shown about in manuscript, not only to friends like Dr. Carlyle but to others—else how did Chesterfield hear of it and come to see it?—and Moore's and Anderson's statements as to Smollett's being cautioned against giving any more copies of his ode retain a very real force. They do not, however, preclude early publication. Such cautions would naturally apply most strongly to the first few dangerous months; but that Smollett, even so soon as July, should actually publish the piece—cautions or no cautions—is a gesture but too familiar and characteristic. It is the perfect complement to his clapping on the final stanza.

The episode of *The Tears of Scotland* is the first landmark in Smollett's career as an author. In it we see the man's most characteristic attitude struck with sureness and finality—the attitude of defiant independence, not without a touch of that irascibility which was to grow upon him so sadly. But although there breathes through *The Tears of Scotland* that "wrathiness" of spirit so characteristic of Smollett, the scourging is in a noble cause, and there is about it rather more idealism and generosity of warmth than support his later struggles. Thus it seems to me that in his first lyric we may mark a clear and satisfying evidence of his mature power—exceptionally tempered with the ardors and idealisms of youth. To say as much is perhaps to come as near an explanation as one can of why, in poetry, he never thereafter surpassed and probably never equaled this first flight.

Long after Smollett's death *The Tears of Scotland* continued one of the most widely reprinted lyrics of the period. It would be too much to say now that it has not felt the touch of time. When Goldsmith included it in his *Beauties of Poesy* (1767), he remarked, justly enough, in a Prefatory Note: "The mechanical part, with regard to the numbers and language, is not so perfect as so short a work as this requires." The poem is in truth rough and unequal—doubtless the penalty of its sheer rush. In this respect, it is instructive to place

beside it another celebration of the rebellion written in the same year, though this time from the English point of view—Collins's exquisite *Ode Written in 1746*:

How sleep the brave who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallow'd mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

These lines are a lesson in the preserving power of sheer art, for through it they bid fair to outlast many an essentially greater but less perfect performance—amongst them, Smollett's. For *The Tears of Scotland*, with all its imperfections on its head, is a human document of those exciting days of '45 and '46 beside which Collins's ode seems a pale and puny thing. It is impossible to read Smollett's poem even now without genuine, immediate emotion.

Yet even that emotional quality has suffered change. Goldsmith, after censuring the careless diction and versification of the poem, goes on in a more favorable strain: "But the pathetic it contains, particularly in the last stanza but one, is exquisitely fine." This next to last stanza (which originally concluded the poem) used often to be cited as an example of the purest pathos. It now seems perhaps the least effective stanza of the poem. I quote it

partly as a curiosity in the change of taste, but more especially for another reason:

The pious mother, doom'd to death,
Forsaken, wanders o'er the heath;
The bleak wind whistles round her head,
Her helpless orphans cry for bread;
Bereft of shelter, food, and friend,
She views the shades of night descend;
And stretch'd beneath th' inclement skies,
Weeps o'er her tender babes, and dies.

These were some of the rumors of “Butcher” Cumberland’s atrocities against civilians. Surely such rumors, with all their warped psychology, strike home to our recollection; yet we do not recognize the idiom. Nevertheless, the critic, I believe, may recognize in this stanza an interesting voice: it is the voice of *The Regicide*. And indeed throughout *The Tears of Scotland* the spirit of *The Regicide* lives again. This is no mere fancy from the proximity of their composition. The very refrain,

Mourn, hapless Caledonia, mourn
Thy banish'd peace, thy laurels torn,

is but a rewording of a line at the climax of *The Regicide*, when Angus exclaims, immediately after the king’s murder, “Weep, Caledonia, weep!—thy peace is slain.” There can be little doubt that Chesterfield, attracted by *The Tears of Scotland*, and being likewise favored with a private view of *The*

Regicide (of which he certainly thought highly for a time, even sending the manuscript to Garrick), felt that he was witnessing in the tragedy merely a larger manifestation of the same power which was so indisputable in the lyric.

With the stimulating private circulation of *The Tears of Scotland*; with its early anonymous appearance, probably at first under a slightly different title; and with the Earl of Chesterfield's interest enlisted both in the lyric and the tragedy, Smollett's literary fortunes must have seemed at this time in a very fair way. Yet the two verse satires with which he chose to follow up this success—the first of them, within a month of *The Groans of Scotland*—were at once a signal of alarm to his friends. And well they might be.

Advice and Reproof

THE first of these, *Advice*, is a satire written in Popean heroic couplets and cast in the form of a dialogue between the Poet and a Friend. Most of the verses are preëmpted by the Poet, who lashes about with dreadful indignation, while the Friend, occasionally adding a discreet twig or two to the flames, ostensibly attempts to soothe this ruffled spirit by giving some very good and very

worldly-wise advice (hence the title); all of which, however, is rejected by the Poet with fine scorn:

If such be life, its wretches I deplore,
And long to quit th' inhospitable shore.

This poem, the full title reading *Advice: A Satire*, appeared in August, 1746. In January, 1747, it was followed by *Reproof: A Satire*, which opens with the fiction of the Friend's reproving the Poet for having published (in the earlier work) advice which had certainly been intended only for private consumption. Though the fiction is not very taking, it serves as a convenient link with the previous poem, to which the second is thus declared to be a sequel.

It is convenient for the moment to consider these poems together. Their biographic interest is naturally considerable. Yet when a young and unknown poet sets out "with manly rage To lash the vices of an impious age," one cannot expect primarily private revelations; for, however grievous his own wrongs may have been, until he is at least to some degree known, he is virtually obliged to hunt bigger game. And so in these poems the perpetual flaunting in the first edition of initials and dashes for perfectly obvious public names is of little particular interest. There is, however, a sprinkling of more personal allusions, which are now more to the point.

It was at just this time that Smollett wrote for

John Rich, manager of Covent Garden, and a man interested primarily in pantomime and musical entertainment, an “opera” entitled *Alceste*, on the strength of which he hoped to induce Rich to put on *The Regicide*. When Smollett finally showed his hand, the manager bluntly declared the tragedy “altogether unfit for the stage”—an issue on which the *Alceste* was wrecked. The music for this opera was said by Moore and Anderson to have been composed by Handel, who (according to Anderson), “finding that no use was intended to be made of it, afterwards adapted it to Dryden’s lesser *Ode for St. Cecilia’s Day*.” Chalmers, however, whose Memoir of Smollett possesses some independent value, questions Handel’s services, citing Dr. Burney to the contrary as a more reliable authority in matters musical. Yet it can scarcely be a mere coincidence that in *Advice*, published but a few months before the break with Rich was an accomplished fact, Smollett should chant:

Again shall Handel raise his laurel’d brow,
Again shall harmony with rapture glow!

One is glad to support so pleasant though fleeting an association.

Rich’s washing his hands of *Alceste* along with *The Regicide* that fall earned him the well-known attack in *Reproof*, which I quote again, since it will be necessary for us to revert to the matter.

Fraught with the spirit of a Gothic monk,
Let Rich, with dulness and devotion drunk,
Enjoy the peal so barbarous and loud,
While his brain spues new monsters to the crowd;
I see with joy the vaticide deplore
An hell-denouncing priest and sov'reign whore.

Another biographical passage of interest in the *Reproof* is the tribute to the Earl of Chesterfield. In view of Chesterfield's interest in *The Tears of Scotland* and *The Regicide*, it is not surprising that "th' enamour'd muse" would not

neglect to pay
To Stanhope's worth the tributary lay;
The soul unstain'd, the sense sublime to paint,
A people's patron, pride, and ornament!

There is also, in *Reproof*, the interesting allusion to Daniel Mackercher as "the melting Scot," whose connection with Smollett is many-angled.

But illuminating as these occasional personal glimpses are, the chief biographic interest—and indeed importance—of these poems appears to me to be of a much broader nature. Smollett himself of course took a most sanguine view of the effect gained by his first published satire. In a note to the first edition of its sequel, he reviews with delighted scorn the wild guesses of the public in their attempt to penetrate the anonymity of *Advice*: "Various have been the conjectures concerning the author of ADVICE, who has been represented as a Jew, a

clergyman, a templar, an independent Elector; nay, some have not scrupled to ascribe the whole performance to the spirit of the late counsellor *Morgan*." To be sure, Smollett was an interested witness; but the fact remains that within six months a sequel had appeared, and that the following year they were both reissued in a combined second edition. Though not epoch-making, the success is unmistakable. The reasons for it I believe are exceptional.

Anderson's reference to these satires as being "possessed of much poetical merit" illustrates well enough the tenor of most early comments. In point of intrinsic merit, *Reproof* now seems to be a slight advance upon *Advice*. Not only is it perceptibly less scurrilous; it contains several sustained passages satirizing with some spirit general social customs instead of private individuals—the use of an empty chair for paying calls, the passion for cards, etc.—the latter giving rise to at least one strikingly vivid descriptive line—

The giggling minx half chok'd behind her cards—

a vision which would not have stained the white radiance of *The Rape of the Lock*. In general, however, Smollett is sadly lacking in such incisive strokes and in all lightness of touch. On the other hand, it would be unjust to deny a certain slugging power to these poems. But neither then nor

now could this “intrinsic merit” (if such it be) of itself beget second editions.

One naturally looks to scurribilities as the explanation. Yet the political audacities are singularly tame. In *Advice* the Friend runs over the names of the great ones whom the Poet’s Muse might profitably address. Though later editors have supplied many of the blanks, in the two editions published during Smollett’s life, these statesmen are designated with exemplary caution as “Sage N—c—tle,” “Gr—ft—n, towering Atlas of the throne,” “Gr—nv—le and B—th illustrious,” and “P—t, th’ unshaken Abdiel.” The Poet curtly spurns the suggestion of adulation with—

Th’ advice is good: the question only, whether
These names and virtues ever dwelt together.

The gentlemen involved can scarcely have lain awake nights over this cutting interruption.

Smollett’s chief butt, however, in both poems was, of course, Sir John Cope, the English general who had been so ignominiously defeated the year before by the Highlanders at Prestonpans. The farce of his military trial afterwards, which had naturally excited intense public interest, is elaborately parodied in *Reproof* as the animal trial of Sir Ape. Smollett can always hold his own in name-calling; but the parody itself exhibits no especial freshness in the reworking of an old idea—in fact, it seems now particularly labored. More-

over, poor Sir John's official character and conduct were too entirely public property for Smollett to preëmpt their possibilities. Neither the public nor Cope himself can have paid very much attention to Smollett's joining in the hue and cry, when their ears were saluted in the streets with the ballad-refrain, sung to a popular tune, "Hey Johnnie Cope, are ye waukin yet?" Smollett's political animus on this occasion was in no way remarkable. Yet in at least one respect the first of these poems was almost incredibly audacious.

I approach this subject with hesitation. But who deals with Smollett yet fears to file his mind is lost. The plain fact is that the dominant attack of *Advice* is not against graft or cowardice in high places but sexual perversion. The central, most sustained passage of the poem, divided between the two speakers, is devoted to this theme, and displays not only a cool accuracy in professional vocabulary, but an easy familiarity with the particular haunts of these unfortunate creatures about the city. The allusions to individuals are unmistakable. I do not refer only to the infamous "Brush" Warren—once a shoe-black—"accomplish'd W-rr-n," as he appears in the poem—but, alas, also to poor Cope. That the particularly unsavory allusion to "C---," with its attendant note on incubation, was a reference to the unfortunate general, is certain from the first edition. There, as consistently throughout the poem, the number of omitted letters was indicated

by the use of separate short dashes for each one—"C---." One would certainly not bring such an imputation against Cope on this mere count of letters; but in the first edition—and there only—appear (with a footnote) two absolutely unquotable lines, in which the damnation is completed by the appearance of the blank in a rime-position—in fact, as "C-pe."

No wonder that we hear from Anderson and others that Smollett's friends were more alarmed than elated over his success! To be sure, actual danger from General Cope, such as he later experienced from Admiral Knowles, was slight, for of all the forms of the dangerous art of libel, this, the blackest, is perhaps also the safest, since redress cannot be come at without of course acknowledging the allusion. Which is not the brightest side of Smollett's pleasantries. Nevertheless, the worst lines of *Advice* were omitted in the second edition—and *Reproof*, the sequel, had not revived so much as a whisper.

If *The Tears of Scotland* typifies the more aspiring side of Smollett's youth, no less vividly does *Advice* typify its less pleasing aspects. In this odiousness of attack we seem to see, as in a flash, the "bubbly-nosed callant" grown up; the apothecary's apprentice, with his medical school cronies; the ship's surgeon in His Majesty's Navy; the struggling city physician. The satire is as indisputably the lowest as the shorter poem is probably the

loftiest expression of his Muse. Yet it is curious to note the affinities between them. Not only are they the twin heirs of his youth; they were certainly written roughly at the same time and probably published within a month of each other; they both draw upon the Scottish rebellion; and in both Smollett's characteristic "wrathiness" is the very breath of their being. Yet with what a difference! And here one cannot but pause to reflect upon how often this odd jostling of the lovely and the unlovely is encountered in Smollett's world. The two seem inextricably involved.

Verses in the Novels

THE "run of approbation" which greeted *The Tears of Scotland*, combined with the less enviable notoriety of *Advice and Reproof*, no doubt helped to smooth the way for that "volume of prose adventures" with which Melopoyn, taking the bookseller's hint, had seen fit to provide himself. Though it is extremely probable that Smollett had done hack-work in prose before this, it is patent that up to the appearance of *Roderick Random* in 1748 his literary ambitions had been poetic. And in *Roderick Random* itself the links with the poetical past are unusually close. For one

thing, two long chapters are devoted to Melopoyn's tale of woe—alias, Smollett and *The Regicide* (published the next year “by the author of *Roderick Random*,” it will be remembered). Again, in a regrettable episode, Earl Strutwell, captivated by Roderick's fine appearance, introduces an unnatural subject of conversation, carried on at some length. Roderick, however, expressed his detestation “in these lines of the satirist”:

Eternal infamy the wretch confound
Who planted first that vice on English ground!
A vice! that, 'spite of sense and nature reigns,
And poisons genial love, and manhood stains.

“The satirist” is Tobias Smollett—the lines being quoted (only too appositely) from *Advice*.

In chapter LIII, the ridiculous lieutenant insists upon entertaining Miss Snapper and the rest with a song. He “began to warble a fashionable air, the first stanza of which he pronounced thus”:

Would you task the moon-ty'd hair,
To yon flagrant beau repair;
Where waving with the popling vow,
The bantling fine will shelter you.

The lieutenant, being ironically told that the music and the words are of a piece, conceives that a high compliment has been paid his vocal talents—“for everybody allows the words are damnable fine.” Miss Snapper, in the smart ensuing dialogue, says

they may be so, but happen to be incomprehensible—and are, in fact, nonsense. Which they certainly are. Here Smollett has obviously parodied some fashionable song of the day. In fact, one may approximate the original lines with some ease, merely reading them out of the burlesque itself. Surely they cannot have run very differently from as follows:

Would you taste the noontide air,
To yon fragrant bower repair;
Where waving with the poplar bough,
The mantling vine will shelter you.

Though incident and verses are of no moment, the same turn of parodying a popular piece was to be used with deadly effect in *Peregrine Pickle*.

There is another example of arrant burlesque in the verses of *Roderick Random*. The hero, in his extremities, is reduced to taking service as a footman with an eccentric old gentlewoman—whom he first finds biting her quill in the throes of literary composition, at length capturing the elusive rime aloud—“Nor would th’ immortal gods my rage oppose”—before she can attend to him. Later, the duenna, whose niece and charge, it develops, is one Narcissa, being no less impressed than her niece with the “parts” of a simple footman, cannot resist communicating some of her compositions. “‘You must know I have planned a tragedy, the subject of which shall be the murder

of a prince before the altar, where he is busy at his devotion. After the deed is perpetrated, the regicide will harangue the people with the bloody dagger in his hand; and I have already composed a speech, which I think will suit the character extremely; here it is.' Then taking up a scrap of paper, she read with violent emphasis and gesture, as follows":

Thus have I sent the simple king to hell,
Without or coffin, shroud, or passing bell;
To me, what are divine or human laws?
I court no sanction but my own applause!
Rapes, robb'ries, treasons yield my soul delight;
And human carnage gratifies my sight:
I drag the parent by the hoary hair,
And toss the sprawling infant on my spear,
While the fond mother's cries regale mine ear,
I fight, I vanquish, murder friends and foes:
Nor dare th' immortal gods my rage oppose.

One gives a theatrical start himself at the words "regicide" and "murder of a prince before an altar." James I was murdered, if not before an altar, in a monastery; and though we would not be so hardy as to suggest that Smollett is here burlesquing his own tragedy, it is at least pleasant to find that his sense of humor did not *always* fail him so sadly in the face of these sublimities.

The incident of this eccentric poetess is one of the two literary episodes in the story, each of which

provides a convenient opening for verses. Roderick, having rapturously admired his mistress's flights, is coldly allowed to shine in his turn. He produces two recent effusions, "which indeed my love for Narcissa had inspired." They are two of the songs to Celia, "When Sappho struck the quiv'ring wire," and "Thy fatal shafts unerring move." These songs were often enough reprinted independently; but they can seem good now only when seen in the dreary setting of most such eighteenth-century lyrics.

The other literary episode is of course Melopoyn's story. Before the harrowing tale of the tragedy is begun, some of Melopoyn's small "detached pieces" are produced and applauded, especially "some elegies in imitation of Tibullus," one of which is submitted to the reader. This is the poem (usually reprinted as the *Love Elegy*) beginning,

Where now are all my flattering dreams of joy?
Monimia, give my soul her wonted rest, etc.

The poem was a favorite in anthologies, appearing more frequently than any of Smollett's other verses, except *The Tears of Scotland*. High praise was bestowed upon it by all early biographers; and it still appears to be distinctly one of his better poems. The heroine of Otway's *Orphan* seems to have especially taken Smollett's fancy. Besides the "Monimia" of this elegy, one recalls the praise of

Mrs. Cibber in that part in *Peregrine Pickle*, and again the Monimia of *Ferdinand Count Fathom*—Renaldo's orphan-mistress. Professor Cross has pointed out Smollett's anticipation of Gothic romance in *Ferdinand Count Fathom*. There is not a little of the same anticipation in this elegy—especially in:

I'll seek some lonely church, or dreary hall,
Where fancy paints the glimm'ring taper blue,
Where damps hang mould'ring on the ivy'd wall,
And sheeted ghosts drink up the midnight dew.

Finally, from this considerably admired “imitation of Tibullus,” the mind momentarily glances forward to the quarrel with Grainger, precipitated by Smollett's review of Grainger's less happy translations of that poet.

In his next novel Smollett continued the practice of including verses. Indeed we have no knowledge of any poetry otherwise published during these years. *Peregrine Pickle* (1751) contains four poems, two of which are serious. “Adieu! ye streams that smoothly flow” (chapter XVIII) is again addressed to “Celia”—which is the measure of its originality. The stanzas to the Lady of Quality (chapter XLVI), as I have suggested elsewhere, are possibly a scrap of Smollett's own “subaltern admiration” for Lady Vane. There are also the satiric verses to Mr. Jumble, Perry's tutor—pleasantly tripping rimes—and the important

parody on Lord Lyttelton's Monody on the death of his wife (chapter CII, first edition). It is impossible to discuss here Smollett's quarrel with Lyttelton. Be it only said that part of his revenge was to write this parody and to place it in the novel in a setting of almost diabolical cruelty. The burlesque of Lyttelton's Elegy on the death of his wife takes the form of an Elegy on the death of a grandmother. The bereaved grandson addresses the physician (a quack previously satirized by Pope) thus:

Where wast thou, Wittol Ward, when hapless fate
From these weak arms mine aged grannam tore:
These pious arms essay'd too late
To drive the dismal phantom from the door.
Could not thy healing drop, illustrious quack,
Could not thy salutary pill prolong her days.
For whom, so oft, to Marybone, alack!
Thy sorrels dragg'd thee thro' the worst of ways?

After a burlesque of pastoral geography, in which Lyttelton's poem had unhappily abounded, the eulogy of the old lady begins:

Her lib'ral hand and sympathising breast,
The brute creation kindly bless'd:
Where'r she trod grimalkin purr'd around.
The squeaking pigs her bounty own'd;
Nor to the waddling duck or gabbling goose,
Did she glad sustenance refuse;
The strutting cock she daily fed,
The turky with his snout so red;

Of chickens careful as the pious hen,
Nor did she overlook the tomtit or the wren;
While redbreast hopp'd before her in the hall,
As if she common mother were of all.

Whatever one may think of the circumstances occasioning this burlesque, surely none can deny its genuine laughableness. One is almost tempted to say that here alone in Smollett's poetry do we feel to the full the push of those larger powers of his genius, which, after all, was chiefly comic.

Roderick Random contains five poems, besides the quotation from *Advice*; *Peregrine Pickle*, four; *Ferdinand Count Fathom*, none; *Launcelot Greaves*, none; *Humphry Clinker*, the *Ode to Leven-Water*. In this verse-record of the novels may be read in part the deflection of Smollett's active interest away from poetry into other channels. Unpublished but not always "new" poems were still to appear occasionally, while previously published verses were sometimes reissued with a significant new twist; but from *Peregrine Pickle* on, the lapse is plain. An example of significant new twist is the manner in which the second song to Celia from *Roderick Random* reappeared in the *Scots Magazine* for September, 1755:

Thy fatal shafts unerring move,
I bow before thine altar, Love!
I feel thy soft irresistible flame
Glide swift through all my vital frame!
I feel thy soft, etc.

The sudden acquisition of a refrain by repetition, combined with the title, *A New Song by Dr. Smollet*, indicates that the lines had been recently set to music. This is but one of many hints as to the favor which these slight lyrics enjoyed in their day.

The Reprisal

IN 1756 Smollett became the chief editor of the *Critical Review*, and the long quarrel with Garrick over the unhappy *Regicide* began to heal, to the advantage of all concerned. High compliments were tendered the great actor in one of the earliest issues of the review; and in January of the next year Smollett's after-piece, *The Reprisal*, was produced at Drury Lane, Garrick behaving with generosity and gallantry. Smollett had at last reached the stage, and with some success, for the farce remained in demand for many years. The "Tars of Old England" are even now a colorfully grotesque gallery, possessing not a little of that stanchness enjoyed by all Smollett's sea-pieces. Their doings are enlivened by four songs, the first being offered by the Irish lieutenant Oclabber, more than half-seas over—a lament for his mistress Sheelah O'Shaunaghan, who, "having drank a cup too many," fell out of a window long, long ago. Oclab-

ber's original Irish, he tells us, had luckily been turned into English by a friend of his—with exemplary elegance, it would appear: “Ye swains of the Shannon, fair Sheelah is gone.” The song itself, though well enough, is feeble in comparison to its vivid context. The same may be said of Harriet's two songs to Champignon. Indeed, the only decisively successful verse is the thumping last chorus. One feels the stage fairly shake to this grand finale:

While British oak beneath us rolls,
And English courage fires our souls;
To crown our toils, the fates decree
The wealth and empire of the sea.

Plainly, the author of *The Tears of Scotland* could sing “Hail, Britannia!” with the best.

The most interesting poetic aspect of *The Reprisal*, however, is its Prologue and Epilogue. The latter, after announcing, in the customary appeal to the house, that “Our bard . . . craves not mercy, but he claims applause,” offers the following contingent promise:

Indulg'd with fav'ring gales and smiling skies,
Hereafter he may board a richer prize.

Hope springs eternal! Yet be it noticed that “our bard” has not (as yet at least) forgotten his bitter lesson. For he continues:

But if this welkin angry clouds deform,
[*Looking round the house.*]
And hollow groans portend th' approaching storm:

Should the descending show'rs of hail redouble,

[*To the gal.*]

And these rough billows hiss, and boil, and bubble,

He'll launch no more on such fell seas of trouble.

The Reprisal, however, won a degree of applause which must have been balm to the author's wounded spirit. But what then of the "richer prize" to come? I believe anyone acquainted with Smollett's story will agree that the reception of *The Reprisal* would seem to him quite ample encouragement to go on. The apparent failure even to attempt following up his hard-won success would seem in itself utterly incomprehensible were it not explained only too sadly by the flood of hack-work in which he now became involved. For in the fair weather which might naturally have followed *The Reprisal* he became engulfed in the severest drudgery of his life, turning out in the very next year his *Compleat History of England*, written, it was said, at the rate of about a century a month; the completely revised edition of *Peregrine Pickle*, his longest novel; large portions of the *Critical Review*; and other obscure hack labors, now lost, but attested by his correspondence and the taunts of Dr. Shebbeare. This was the drudgery which irreparably undermined his health. Here was no time for indulging a fond but plainly perilous taste for the drama. Nor was time ever found thereafter.

Nothing, then, seemed to come of the promise

held out in the Epilogue of *The Reprisal*. Yet to me there is something arrestingly vivid in that last gesture itself. A sore lesson has been learned; the breakers of “such fell seas of trouble” have been both seen and heard. Yet even now,

Indulg'd with fav'ring gales and smiling skies,
Hereafter he may board a richer prize.

How characteristic yet pathetic it all seems! The fresh effort will be no mere farce, but some “richer prize”; something—dare one hope?—in which Garrick himself may appear, after all; something—ah, yes!—more like *The Regicide*. But the pressure of affairs is too great; one hears, too, the voices of soft discouragement, cruel-kind; and once again nothing comes of the dream of his youth.

Fugitive Poems

IN 1759 plans were laid for a new monthly magazine, or “Repository for Ladies and Gentlemen.” Without relinquishing the *Critical Review*, Smollett, with Goldsmith to help him, undertook the additional editorial direction; and in January, 1760, the *British Magazine* made its first appearance. The *pièce de resistance* was a new novel by Smollett, *The Life and Adventures of Sir Launce-*

lot Greaves, the first English novel to appear serially. Hitherto, Smollett's editorial labors had been confined to passing judgment upon other people's work in his review; the new connection afforded a convenient outlet for original work of his own. Not only was *Launcelot Greaves* thus given to the world; while it was appearing, the magazine also ran in rapid succession a series of lyrics by Smollett: in April, the *Ode to Blue-Ey'd Ann*; in June, the *Ode to Sleep*; in July, the *Ode to Mirth*; and in August, the song "To fix her—'twere a task as vain." All these poems were of course printed anonymously, in accordance with the usual practice of the day. I believe, however, that besides these four pieces (credited to Smollett from the original, posthumous Collection of his verse in 1777) there are as many more by him scattered through the same convenient pages.

But let us first examine the originally identified group. In view of Smollett's scanty known output, numbering but eight titles outside his plays and novels, such a burst, even at its minimum, is little short of breath-taking. As above hinted, however, it cannot be ascribed to any new springtide in the poet's life. Most of the verses had, in fact, been written some time before. The first poem, the romantic ode to his "Nanny"—that is, Nancy Lascelles, his wife now these many years—and in the magazine entitled in full *A Declaration in Love: Ode to Blue-Ey'd Ann*—is palpably a bit that has

been on hand for some time, merely awaiting a suitable medium of publication. The next poem, the *Ode to Sleep*, had been written no less than fourteen years before.

This little *Ode to Sleep*—the third from last line of which, “Rich Industry, with toil embrown’d,” did duty again as the third from last line of *Leven-Water*, “And Industry, embrown’d with toil”—possesses an interest quite disproportionate to its intrinsic merit. An odd circumstance about its publication was that it appeared simultaneously in England and Scotland—in the *British Magazine*, as here noted, and also in the *Scots Magazine*—both for June, 1760. But what is much more noteworthy is the fact that to the title of the poem as it appeared in both magazines were subjoined the oracular words, “*Intended as a chorus in a tragedy.*” The mind at once leaps back to the lost *Alceste*—of which, in fact, the lyric is unquestionably a survival. In the very opening lines one catches unmistakable glimpses of that exotic form of entertainment for which Rich was famed:

Soft Sleep, profoundly pleasing power,
Sweet patron of the peaceful hour,
O listen from thy calm abode,
And hither wave thy magic rod;
Extend thy silent soothing sway,
And charm the canker care away.

5

After which general invocation, the remaining lines

present the different forms in which the “pleasing power” may perhaps respond:

Whether thou lov'st to glide along,
Attended by an airy throng
Of gentle dream and smiles of joy,
Such as adorn the wanton boy; 10
Or to the monarch's fancy bring
Delights that better suit a king,
The glitt'ring host, the groaning plain,
The clang of arms, and victor's train;
Or should a milder vision please, 15
Present the happy scenes of peace;
Plump Autumn, blushing all around,
Rich Industry, with toil embrown'd;
Content, with brow serenely gay,
And genial Art's resplendent ray. 20

Rich may well have been pleased with his librettist, and have genuinely regretted the young man's impossible persistence about that tragedy of his. For does one not see here, in the eye of the producer, a very visible “airy throng” attending “the wanton boy”? hear, as well as see, “the groaning plain, The clang of arms, and victor's train”? and at last, as the choral climax, thrill to a rapid ensemble of plump Autumn, tanned Husbandry, serene Content, and finally (front, centre) “genial Art” with a resplendent, spiked “ray”? Alas, that such a librettist should ever deal in *Regicides!*! It appears from lines six and eleven that Sleep is here bidden to charm the “canker care” away from some monarch

—King Admetus of Thessaly, one supposes. If it cannot be asserted, despite the well-timed reference to Art, that Smollett has quite caught the Greek spirit, the lines are nevertheless perhaps as near the mark as one has a right to expect from the author of *Humphry Clinker* collaborating with “Lun” Rich.

Of the other two poems in the *British Magazine* originally identified as Smollett’s, little need be said. The *Ode to Mirth*, like the *Ode to Sleep*, fairly invites a musical setting. It is colorlessly reminiscent of several Shakespearean songs. In view of this, but more especially of the preponderating evidence (as yet only partially adduced) that Smollett was rapidly using up old poems in the *British Magazine*, I feel little hesitation in pronouncing the *Ode to Mirth* similarly early work. The song “To fix her—’twere a task as vain”—the “well-turned tetrameters,” as Seccombe calls them—is one of the happiest of Smollett’s lyrics. It calls for no special comment, however.

But what now of the additional poems by Smollett hinted at above? It should be at once remarked that the existing identifications are peculiarly unsatisfying. As before stated, but eight titles are known outside the plays and novels. Of these eight, *Advice*, *Reproof*, *The Tears of Scotland*, and the posthumous *Ode to Independence* were from their first appearance fairly obvious. Thus only four poems which can be called “fugitive pieces” have

ever been gathered together—the above four poems from the *British Magazine*, vouched for as his by the first collector in the *Plays and Poems* of 1777, the earliest known Smollett collection of any kind. Since then, no additions have been made to that original stock. And though Smollett's interests in the main came to be directed elsewhere, the reader of these pages will not need to be reminded either of the original earnestness of his devotion or of a certain clinging persistence in these matters. For a writer of Smollett's position and facility, I believe, therefore, that a group of but four fugitive pieces is a preposterously scanty allowance. In turning over the varied poetical garners of this period I have several times been forcefully struck with touches which seemed to me only Smollett's—verses which chance or curiosity may perhaps sometime prove to be his. I do not, however, wish to cloud the issue here with these wider possibilities. But in the case of the *British Magazine*, known to have been used by Smollett as a convenient repository, especially for poems "on hand," the task may be approached with more assurance.

Launcelot Greaves appeared serially from January, 1760, through December, 1761, thus attesting the intimacy of Smollett's connection with the magazine over that period. The parallel identified poems appeared severally, as above noted, in April, June, July, and August of 1760. It should further

be observed that the place of honor for the month was usually accorded the editor-in-chief's poems, all but the *Ode to Mirth* leading the "Poetical Essays" for the given issue. In October, 1760, the "Poetical Essays" were led off by the following ballad:

Pastoral Ballad.

1.

Where the elm-trees form a grove,
Sacred to the god of love;
Where the linnets chearful strain
Hails me to my lonely *Anne*:

2.

There the lonely day I mourn,
Waiting for my Love's return;
Where noon's heat the Zephyrs fan,
There I sing of lovely *Anne*.

3.

On yonder knole I oft recline
Where spring the wood-rose and the bine;
There I sigh! Assist me, Pan,
While I sing of lovely *Anne*.

4.

Or along the river's side
Where the silver fishes glide,
There, Oh Cupid! first began
My passion for the lovely *Anne*.

5.

My fair's approach afar I see,
She bends her willing steps to me;
With love's swiftest foot I ran,
Joyful to meet my lovely *Anne*.

The most obviously suggestive point about these verses is of course the fair one's name—despite the variant spelling. To be sure, Anne was no more uncommon a name in life then than now; yet it is not too much to say that in the *poetry* of the time, amid the Chloes, Sylvias, Lucindas, and even Amonias, it is indeed as rare as may be. The only other tribute to the name that I myself have encountered is Smollett's other poem, published but a few months before in the same magazine. In that poem, too, the name recurs as a refrain in the last line of each stanza. Indeed, assuming that these verses were Smollett's, one would probably be surprised not to find them actually entitled *Ode to Lovely Anne*, were it not that the poet might then perhaps be taxed with a certain lack of inventiveness. As regards the substance of the poem, the pastoral element is of course sufficiently conventional; yet in the wood-rose and wood-bine, the river with its silver fish, one seems to feel a premonition of the later, well-stocked Leven, on whose flowery banks he had likewise been

free to rove,
And tune the rural pipe to love.

It is perhaps not worth while to press strongly for the identification of so mediocre a poem. Yet it should be noted that despite this mediocrity—palpable enough, I believe, even amid the shoals of such verses in its day—the lines were given the place of honor in the poetry for October; further, that if these were indeed Smollett's lines, they had obviously been resurrected from the dim and distant past, just as had been the companion relic of his courtship, the lines saved from *Alceste*, and two other poems we are about to examine—all of which thus join hands in the happily convenient pages of the *British Magazine*.

In April, 1760, the *British Magazine*, for some reason, published a full-sized supplementary number, without date. (Its position between the regular April and May numbers is proved by the sequence of the chapters of *Launcelot Greaves* included.) The “Poetical Essays” for this second April number is headed by a pleasantly jingling political trifle called *The Junto*, written in the anapæstic metre of the verses of Mr. Jumble in *Peregrine Pickle* and of a song in *The Reprisal*. The rhythm, the humorous turn, the bad French rimes, a culinary metaphor paralleled in the Prologue to *The Reprisal*, and perhaps again its odd place of honor leading the poems of the issue, make me strongly suspect it as Smollett's. But whether or not this *jeu d'esprit* is Smollett's, it is immediately

followed by another trifle which I regard as indisputably his. I quote it in full:

Morning, in Spring, a Fragment.

Grey morn ascends the eastern vault of Heav'n
With feather'd foot. Led by the jolly hours
That circling dance around his golden car,
See Phœbus rise, and warm effulgence spread.
The mountain top now shines with orient gold.
The face of Nature feels the kindling heat,
And laughing landscapes own the fertile god.
The dew-drop glitters through the verdant plain
With short-liv'd radiance—soon to be exhal'd.
Hence grandeur learn, how fugitive thy pomp!
The garden's blossoms scent the vernal air;
On ev'ry spray the feather'd choir exult
In the soft blessings of the blooming spring;
And the sweet song from echoing hill and dale,
From dale to hill resounds the Deity's praise;
That power which spoke creation into life.
Now labour bursting from the bands of sleep,
Hies to the field with industry the boor,
And ploughs the stubborn glebe.

It should first be remarked that blank-verse is a poetical medium almost non-appearing in these monthly offerings. In the thirteen issues of this particular magazine for 1760, only one other example is met with—a long poem which, though certainly not by Smollett, must have come under his eye with peculiar interest, being entitled simply,

Poem from Angelsey. During the next year, the magazine included but one blank-verse poem in all—again a sustained piece. I do not believe it is too rash to infer that some special “interest,” with or on the part of the editor, must be conceded to account for the magazine’s running this brief “fragment” of detached, blank-verse description, breaking off in the middle of a line. My judgment is that these lines are a fragment left stranded by one of the many revisions of *The Regicide*. The style seems to me to ring true in every particular: in its general “warm effulgence” of vocabulary, its heavily stressed alliteration, and gleams of that rhetorical power which occasionally infuses a certain fictitious life even into the finished tragedy—as here, “That power which spoke creation into life.” If the description seems far afield from the “regicides,” it is not more so than many other passages in such heroic tragedies—though in this case there happens to be a sufficiently obvious, moralizing link—“Hence, grandeur, learn, how fugitive thy pomp!” Finally, in the next to last line we meet our old friend “industry,” or industriousness—to our ears a slightly odd usage of the word, yet seemingly Smollett’s favorite personification. Be it also noted in this connection that neither here nor in *Sleep* nor in *Leven-Water* nor in the *Ode to Independence* did Smollett write the personification with a capital—modern editions and the gen-

eral practice of his age to the contrary. This internal evidence, combined with circumstantial probability, seems to me to warrant our regarding this *Fragment* as in fact Rejected Lines from *The Regicide*.

Any additions to Smollett's Muse must, I feel, be of some interest. Yet it must be confessed that the pieces just examined are nearly devoid of intrinsic merit. But with the next and last poem which I would add to the quota, the case is slightly different. For if this poem is allowed to be Smollett's, as I feel certain it must, it should take its place amongst the better verses from his pen. This poem is an ode to General Wolfe, of Quebec fame, which I shall presently quote in full. It appeared in the second number of the *British Magazine*—that is, February, 1760. It does not celebrate Wolfe's capture of Quebec and spectacular death, though the event had been accomplished at the time of publication. Rather, as will be seen from the full title, it is an "*Ode to the late Gen. Wolfe, written after the reduction of Louisburg.*" Louisburg, besieged by Generals Amherst and Boscawen, with Wolfe (then Brigadier-General) carrying the brunt of the attack under them, fell on July 27, 1758. Thus, at the very outset, appears a characteristic sign, for this, like four other poems by Smollett found in the monthly garners of this new magazine, is obviously an "old" poem. It may also be noted, with no special stress, that though

the honor of leading off the dozen poems of the issue is in this case conceded to the official *Ode for the New Year* by the Poet-Laureate, the *Ode to General Wolfe* immediately follows it.

Before examining the verses themselves for internal evidence, one or two other general matters may be mentioned in passing as bearing more remotely on the question. Wolfe was the especial "find" of Pitt, who is given credit for first recognizing the measure of his ability beneath an unprepossessing exterior. Upon Wolfe's returning to England for his health in 1758, following the reduction of Louisburg, he was personally remitted to North America by Pitt—and now in command of the new expedition against Quebec. It was of course precisely at this time that Smollett was ingratiating himself with Pitt—the dedication of the *History* to him in 1758 marking the beginning of a connection which continued for some years. It is said that the patent for the new *British Magazine* was secured through Smollett's interest; certainly its pages in the opening number were, again, dedicated to the Great Commoner. Thus Wolfe's early prowess, which, though not unknown, was not generally recognized till after the Quebec exploit, might well have been a theme to find prompt favor with Smollett.

Returning now to the verses themselves, we note the date of their composition in 1758. This means

that, if accepted as Smollett's, they would be, so far as we know, the next verses written by him following *The Reprisal*. As will be seen by a perusal of the poem, patriotic fervor again runs high in this ode, and again it is of course directed against the French. All of which is admittedly too general to count for anything by itself. But, more particularly, there is in the ode an echo from *The Reprisal* so curious that I believe few will fail to be impressed. The Prologue to *The Reprisal* closes with nine lines recalling the former glories of Old England. Three heroic names are invoked. A line alluding to "Edward's banners on the Gallic shore" is followed by this couplet:

When Howard's arm Eliza's vengeance hurl'd,
And Drake diffus'd her fame around the world.

These two great Elizabethan seamen are obviously apt illustrations for introducing *The Reprisal; or the Tars of Old England*. The poet of the patriotic *Ode to General Wolfe*, written the next year, likewise wishes, in the last stanza, to invoke names which will be at once patterns and inspirations to the general. Two names only are cited:

While Drake's or Howard's mighty soul
Guides thy career to glory's goal.

Surely this cannot be a mere coincidence. A patriotic illustration, singling out these names from all

the list of British heroes, is used with perfect appropriateness in Smollett's *Reprisal*. In patriotic verses written the next year, the same illustration is used again, even though, in the second instance, the citation of two admirals as an example and inspiration to a British general is, if one pauses to reflect, something less than felicitous. The psychology, however, seems plain—and the conclusion well-nigh inevitable. I also call attention to the last line of the second stanza, "The frozen and the fervid zone," as a favorite rhetorical contrast with Smollett, being prominently used in the *Ode to Blue-Ey'd Ann* and later, with sustained effect, in the *Ode to Independence*. Again, the odd spelling of "tremend'ous" in the fourth stanza represents an orthographical peculiarity of Smollett's—cf. Angus's exclamation in Act V, scene v, of *The Regicide*: "Tremend'ous Powers!" (first edition, p. 71). The metre is Smollett's favorite octosyllabic couplet, characteristically used, despite one irregular line. But of course the final appeal must to be the general ring of the lines. I believe no one acquainted with *The Tears of Scotland* (and also *The Regicide* and *The Reprisal*, if such there be) can read through the lines below without feeling that he has heard the very voice of Smollett.

*Ode addressed to the late Gen. Wolfe,
Written after the reduction of Louisburg.*

I.

Sprung from an ancient, honour'd race,
Whom courage, fame, and candour grace,
Accept, O Wolfe! th' exulting lay
That hails thy valour's dawning ray.
When such atchievements gild thy morn,
What trophies shall thy noon adorn?

II.

Some deaf to the shrill trump of fame
In sloth exhaust their youthful flame;
Some, rous'd at morn, the stag pursue;
And from the thicket sweep the dew;
While others tempt for wealth alone
The frozen and the fervid zone.

III.

A fairer meed thy virtue charms,
A nobler flame thy bosom warms:
To wake again the British soul;
Thy country's bolts again to roll;
With vengeance whelm her haughty foe;
And with fresh conquests wreath her brow.

IV.

Convuls'd by the tremend'ous shock
Th' embattled tow'r and rifted rock
Shook on America's affrighted strand,
When havock rag'd at thy command;
When on the Gaul destruction broke
In horrid peals from fire and smoke.

V.

May triumphs still attend thine arm,
And Britain's cause thy genius warm;
While Drake's or Howard's mighty soul
Guides thy career to glory's goal;
The Muse shall then on bolder wing
Essay thy bright exploits to sing.

Though these lines are narrower in their appeal than *The Tears of Scotland*, they appear to me, in their fire and energy, a not altogether unworthy companion-piece.

The pages of the *British Magazine* afford us our only real glimpse of Smollett's occasional poetry. Yet most, if not all, of the poems there published were old, as we have seen—the age varying from the fairly recent *Ode to General Wolfe* to the fragment of *The Regicide* dating back roughly some twenty years. Though this wholesale resurrection in a sense testifies to his continued interest in his own verses, it also shows unmistakably a lapse of the active poetic impulse. Indeed, long before this his main interests have obviously been in other things. And now, having gotten the last of his brain-children safely “married off,” so to speak, in the *British Magazine*, we hear no more (definitely) from his Muse for over ten years, when the *Ode to Leven-Water* appeared in his last novel, published but a few months before his death.

*Last Poems: Odes to Leven-Water
and Independence*

Of the *Ode to Leven-Water* I shall say nothing further, though I may perhaps be pardoned for quoting a poem which has been so often referred to in these pages.

Ode to Leven-Water.

On Leven's banks, while free to rove,
And tune the rural pipe to love;
I envied not the happiest swain
That ever trod th' Arcadian plain.

Pure stream! in whose transparent wave
My youthful limbs I wont to lave;
No torrents stain thy limpid source;
No rocks impede thy dimpling course,
That sweetly warbles o'er its bed,
With white, round, polish'd pebbles spread;
While, lightly pois'd, the scaly brood
In myriads cleave thy crystal flood;
The springing trout in speckled pride;
The salmon, monarch of the tide;
The ruthless pike, intent on war;
The silver eel, and mottled par.

Devolving from thy parent lake,
A charming maze thy waters make,

By bow'rs of birch, and groves of pine,
And hedges flow'r'd with eglantine.

Still on thy banks so gaily green,
May num'rous herds and flocks be seen,
And lasses chanting o'er the pail,
And shepherds piping in the dale,
And ancient faith that knows no guile,
And industry embrown'd with toil,
And hearts resolv'd, and hands prepar'd,
The blessings they enjoy to guard.

Of the posthumous *Ode to Independence* much more remains to be said. It has been the fashion to hesitate judiciously over its authenticity, and to refer to it as “probably but not certainly” Smollett’s. This hesitancy seems to me quite idle. Its pedigree is at least as plain as that of several other accredited poems, as to the authorship of which we have really no “proof” beyond the tacit inclusion of them in the first posthumous collection of his poems by an unknown compiler. The *Ode to Independence* was first published at Glasgow in 1773, in quarto form, with the title: *Ode to Independence by the late T. Smollett, M.D., with Notes and Observations*. An Advertisement prefixed to the text asserts the authenticity of the piece on “the best authority.” The Observations printed with it are the extended critical and appreciative remarks of Professor Richardson of Glasgow. No one has ever questioned Professor Richardson’s integrity at

least—who, besides these annotations, is said by Moore to have written the Prologue to the special performance of *Venice Preserved* given at Edinburgh in 1784 for the benefit of Smollett's widow. So far as the ode itself goes, nothing in conception or execution could well be more characteristic. Moreover, the last strophe contains a biographical allusion. One of the obscure writers whom Smollett rescued from abject poverty by employing on the *Critical Review* was later taken to India as private secretary to a general. After only three years' absence, he was able to return with no less than forty thousand pounds—and proceeded to treat Smollett and other benefactors not only with ingratitude but contempt. After Smollett's death, Hamilton, proprietor and printer of the *Critical Review*, identified the story of Paunceford's ingratitude to Mr. Serle at Bath, in the first volume of *Humphry Clinker*, as in fact an account of this incident. As we shall see, the *Ode to Independence* was composed at about the time *Humphry Clinker* was begun—in view of which fact it is scarcely possible to doubt Mr. Chambers's suggestion that the last strophe of his ode is another contemptuous glance at this ingrate and spoiler from India:

In fortune's car behold that minion ride,
With either India's glittering spoils oppress'd;
So moves the sumpter-mule in harness'd pride,
That bears the treasure which he cannot taste.

For him let venal bards disgrace the bay,
And hireling minstrels wake the tinkling string;
Her sensual snares let faithless pleasure lay;
And jingling bells fantastic folly ring;
Disquiet, doubt, and dread shall intervene;
And nature, still to all her feelings just,
In vengeance hang a damp on every scene,
Shook from the baleful pinions of disgust.

If there seems doubt as to this application, let the reader consult the account of Paunceford's way of living in his new luxury, conveyed in the letter dated "Bath, May 10," in *Humphry Clinker*. Furthermore, we shall find that the closing antistrophe of the poem is even more surcharged with autobiography. Finally, close parallel phrases could be pointed out between this ode and Smollett's other poems, if it were necessary; but no one, I feel certain, who pursues our observations on the poem in other connections, will doubt of its authorship.

This posthumous ode was at once greeted as the crowning effort of Smollett's poetic genius. Nor has any commentator since ventured to withhold praise. Anderson's statement is not more extravagant than most comments of the period: "His *Ode to Independence* . . . rivals in spirit and sublimity, in strength of conception and beauty of colouring, the sublime odes of Dryden, Akenside, Collins, and Gray, the great masters of the British lyre." As late as 1867, the usually cool and judicious Chambers, at the end of his *Memoir*, exclaims regarding

this poem: "The burst of feeling in the first stanza, and the vigorous image it presents of one following an independent course under difficulties, have stamped it on the minds of Englishmen with a depth and permanency scarcely enjoyed by any other stanza in the whole range of English poetry." Such accents must fall strangely on the ears of Smollett's readers to-day, who, as a rule, simply "didn't know he wrote any poetry." But let us see for ourselves. The first stanza opens as follows:

Thy spirit, Independence, let me share,
Lord of the lion-heart and eagle-eye;
Thy steps I follow with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky;
Deep in the frozen regions of the north
A goddess violated brought thee forth,
Immortal Liberty, whose look sublime
Hath bleach'd the tyrant's cheek in every varying clime.

However we may respond to this passage as a whole, the flashing power of such a line as the second cannot be lightly dismissed.

In early comments, references to Gray were naturally frequent, since the ode obviously challenges comparison with his Pindarics. Indeed, I believe there is here a closer affinity with Gray than has been remarked. For example, the first strophe, quoted in part above, concludes as follows:

What time the iron-hearted Gaul,
With frantic Superstition for his guide,
Arm'd with the dagger and the pall,
The sons of Woden to the field defied;
The ruthless hag, by Weser's flood,
In heav'n's name urg'd th' infernal blow;
And red the stream began to flow—
The vanquish'd were baptiz'd in blood!

As we shall see, the probable date of the *Ode to Independence* follows closely the appearance of Gray's novel Norse fragments, *The Descent of Odin* and *The Triumphs of Owen*, both published in 1764. Not only is the above imagery obviously Norse, but the general conception of the birth of Independence far in those frozen regions seems strikingly reminiscent. Indeed, in the first antistrophe, describing the violation, Smollett appears to have borrowed an expression, and something more, from a passage in Gray's *Descent of Odin*. In that poem, the Prophetess foretells a wondrous birth:

In the caverns of the west,
By Odin's fierce embrace compress'd,
A wondrous boy shall Rinda bear,
Who ne'er shall comb his raven hair, etc.

In Smollett's ode the destined father of Independence, a shaggy and bearded savage, discovering Liberty asleep in a "*cave*," straightway "*compress'd* her in his vig'rous arms." Gray's influence

and example are also probably chiefly responsible for the loose Pindaric arrangement into strophe, antistrophe, etc. If so, despite a marked gain in technical precision, the influence cannot be called fortunate. For it is indeed most *unfortunate* to Smollett's present poetic fame that that poem into which Moore and others felt he had "collected all the energy and enthusiasm of his poetical powers," should have been cast in the form of a Pindaric ode. For no poetical idiom is now so hopelessly obsolete. It is a language we no longer ever speak, and scarcely understand. It is therefore of no avail to say that Smollett's ode is in truth what many contemporaries thought it, at least a worthy rival of Gray's; for we may rest assured that even *The Bard* and *The Progress of Poesy* would have sunk into Eternal Night long before this—at all events, so far as the general reader is concerned—had they not been supported by a somewhat more popular poem.

Thus once more in judging Smollett's poetry we are driven back upon its biographic significance as the only adequate measure of its value. And one is glad to find that in this respect at least his most ambitious lyric remains a beacon of light. And here the question of the date of its composition—at least approximately—forces itself upon our attention. For in view of the poet's ringing celebration of the independent spirit, one naturally wishes to know whether these feelings found such expression in

Smollett's early days, middle life, or even—stoically and almost defiantly—in the later, darker years of broken health. That the latter was unquestionably the case enhances the interest and appeal of the lines.

I have already pointed out the probable influence of Gray's Norse fragments, published in 1764. More specific indications as to the date are obtainable, however. In the third strophe, we hear of Independence:

Ev'n now he stands on Calvi's rocky shore
And turns the dross of Corsica to gold.

A footnote adds: "The noble stand made by Pascal Paoli and his associates against the usurpations of the French king must ever endear them to all the sons of Liberty and Independence." The French held Calvi till 1757. In 1758 Paoli began slowly bringing order out of anarchy, acting as the virtual dictator of Corsica for the next ten years. In 1768 the second and immediately disastrous struggle with France began, Paoli being forced, the following year, to take refuge in England. Thus the above lines and note fall within the peaceful period of 1758-1767. The verses, however, plainly point to a time of hopeful prosperity, and one naturally thinks of the period when negotiations with Rousseau as prospective lawgiver to the new nation were afoot, of Boswell's memorable visit to Paoli in 1765 with a letter of introduction

from Rousseau, and still more (upon his return in 1766) of his talking to everyone and anyone in England about it—even calling upon Pitt dressed in Corsican attire to plead the cause of the noble islanders. There can be little doubt that in England Paoli, and Corsican affairs generally, were most in the air in the year 1766—and largely due, we must admit, to Boswell's characteristic little stir. Smollett himself had gone to the continent in 1763. Presumably he did not become acquainted with Gray's *Norse fragments* (1764) till after his return to England in the spring of 1765. The next year, Boswell was back and briskly waking England up to the Corsican question. Thus the year 1766 may be pitched upon with fair peace of mind as the approximate date of the composition of the *Ode to Independence*. It is exceedingly improbable that it can have been composed earlier than 1765, and impossible that it was composed later than 1767, the last year of peace, when one could well say that Independence 'even now was turning the dross of Corsica to gold.'

Thus the poem was written during Smollett's last years in England. Those familiar with his story will not need to be reminded of their sadness. Upon his return in 1765, he suffered from rheumatism, a slow fever, and acute insomnia, which marred but could not spoil his last, golden visit to Scotland. From Scotland he went direct to Bath, to consult physicians. Here a serious ulcer (thought to have

been cancerous) which for months had deprived him of the use of his right arm, at length yielded to treatment. His constitution, however, was irretrievably broken, and in 1768 he was again obliged to flee South in search of that health which "I am persuaded I shall never recover." He died at Leghorn, Italy, in 1771. It is only in the light of these circumstances that the strength of soul breathing through this posthumous ode can be appreciated. With such a picture in mind, surely no change in poetical fashions can deprive the once-famous opening lines of their moving power even now:

Thy spirit, Independence, let me share,
Lord of the lion-heart and eagle-eye;
Thy steps I follow with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky.

And scarcely less fine to me seems the proud retrospect closing the third strophe:

He, guardian genius, taught my youth
Pomp's tinsel livery to despise:
My lips by him chastis'd to truth
Ne'er paid that homage which my heart denies.

It was true; and dearly had this (often misguided) inflexibility cost him; yet such reiterated loyalty to so costly an ideal seems—here—little short of august.

This *Ode to Independence* is indeed a revealing spiritual flash-back across the vista of his troubled life to those early days of Dumbarton Castle, Sir

William Wallace, and James I, the murdered poet-king; far more significantly, I believe, than the frankly reminiscent *Ode to Leven-Water*. As one comes to the quiet close of the *Ode to Independence*—"conventional, formal, flat," I suppose it must be called—he should (if it were possible) read Smollett's letter to his old friend, Dr. Moore, about his health at this time—"I could not sleep without an opiate, my fever became continual, my appetite failed," etc., etc.—and then read the poet's desire to be

Where the pois'd lark his evening ditty chaunts,
And health, and peace, and contemplation dwell.
There study shall with solitude recline;
And friendship pledge me to his fellow-swains;
And toil and temperance sedately twine
The slender cord that fluttering life sustains;
And fearless poverty shall guard the door;
And taste unspoil'd the frugal table spread;
And industry supply the humble store;
And sleep unbrib'd his dews refreshing shed.

Conclusion

AND what now shall we think of the question we have had under consideration? No one would venture to call Smollett a great poet. Yet it would seem to me grossly unjust to deny him some in-

sight and occasional flashes of the true fire. Obviously, he is far more of a poet than Fielding, despite the latter's more voluminous "works" in this department. In fact, one may ask the somewhat surprising question, What other major English novelist of the past, save George Meredith and Sir Walter Scott, is as much of a true poet as Tobias Smollett? No special surprise attaches to the fact that the creator of Richard Feverel is also the author of *Love in the Valley*, or to the fact that the author of the Waverley Novels first gave us "Breathes there a man with soul so dead" and *Marmion*. But that the author of *Peregrine Pickle*, *Humphry Clinker*, *Habbakkuk Hilding*, *The History and Adventures of an Atom*, should remain, in any possible degree whatever, a true poet, is little short of amazing. And yet, strange as the statement may sound, I believe Smollett's prose is in many essentials unusually "poetical" work.

It is poetical partly because it is not the world of reality. The coarseness and realism in his novels, of which we hear so much, are pushed to the point of extravagance where they cease to be true, and are in themselves a kind of romance. In those vivid, grotesque pages of his we are lost, almost from first to last, in a world of the imagination. Those pages, moreover, are animated by a fertility of incident, a speed, energy and vigor of development which I believe are quite without parallel in the English novel. These prose qualities are what in

poetry would be called “fire” or “passion”—palpably the spirit which blows through *The Tears of Scotland* and the *Ode to Independence*. It is true that in Smollett this warmth is often nearer the warmth of anger than of love and tenderness; but it is in no case the mere hardness and callousness which Henley would have us see as Smollett’s fatal weakness; and its affinity, good and bad, to the poetical temperament is close. Though I would not be thought to hold the quality predominant, I believe justice has never been done the finer emotional feeling of Smollett’s novels. There is of course more goodness of heart in Parson Adams and in Fielding’s works generally than in any character or work of Smollett’s; but in point of pathetic incidents and strokes of characterization which affect us emotionally, the advantage is all the other way. I am not thinking chiefly of *Humphry Clinker*, the greater mellowness of which is remarked by everyone; but rather, even, of the coarsest, most brutal and powerful of his novels, *Peregrine Pickle*. But just as it is a poor reader who does not see that behind the “wrathiness” of *The Tears of Scotland* there are *tears*, and behind the sternness of the *Ode to Independence* pity and sorrow; so it is a poor reader who carries away from this, Smollett’s longest and in many respects greatest and most characteristic novel, only the impression of “the ferocious Pickle.” Commodore Trunnion, from a comic-valentine figure with a smashed heel,

a scar across the nose, and “a patch that covered the place of one eye,” slowly grew upon his creator, as only the greatest characters have done. His end, as Saintsbury said, is in truth one of the great death-scenes of literature—a strange mixture of sordidness, dignity and pathos, for which the only parallel is the account of Falstaff’s death in *Henry V*. Of such a scene in prose Fielding was no more capable than he was capable of *The Tears of Scotland* in poetry. One thinks also of the incident of the Scottish exiles in *Peregrine Pickle*—Smollett’s countrymen exiled after the suppression of the Rebellion, whom he had met at Boulogne, and who regularly every evening, and quite solemnly, walk along the shore where they can see the cliffs of England. It has been said—and in connection with this very passage—that Smollett is pathetic only by accident. Let any reader inclined to accept such a dictum turn to the account of little Tommy’s death of the smallpox in chapter XXI of *Launce-lot Greaves* and hear the “dying innocent’s” words: “Tommy won’t leave you, my dear Mamma—if Death comes to take Tommy, Papa shall drive him away with his sword.” The reader may perhaps not weep over the episode, but he will be in no doubt as to the author’s deliberate *desire* to bring tears to the eye. Surely, to imply that a feeling for the pathetic was so beyond the callous ken of our redoubtable doctor that when he was pathetic he was so only by accident, is a little hard.

One of the most sustained examples of the finer underlying feeling in Smollett's novels is Tom Pipes—again in that most brutal of the novels—Tom Pipes, whom Burke regarded as “the most humorous and highly finished character ever invented.” Dozens of minor touches in his characterization might be cited; but perhaps the crowning stroke is where Sophy tries to reward him for having saved her from the fire in the inn. Here his good-natured, almost brilliant stupidity, his rough boorishness, are suddenly projected upon the lurking background of a forgotten self, pitifully uncultivated, but unmistakable. Sophy, who laughingly admits that by the same right that Peregrine can now claim Emilia for having saved her life, Pipes could claim her, asks the Boatswain if his heart is not otherwise engaged. “Tom, who did not conceive the meaning of the question, stood silent according to custom; and the interrogation having been repeated, answered with a grin, ‘Heart-whole as a biscuit, I’ll assure you, mistress.’—‘What?’ said Emilia, ‘have you never been in love, Thomas?’—‘Yes, forsooth,’ said the valet without hesitation, ‘sometimes of a morning.’ Peregrine could not help laughing, and his mistress looked a little disconcerted at this blunt repartee: while Sophy, slipping a purse into his hand, told him there was something to purchase a periwig. Tom, having consulted his master’s eyes, refused the present, saying, ‘No, thank you as much as if I did’; and

though she insisted upon his putting it in his pocket . . . he could not be prevailed upon to avail himself of her generosity; but following her to the other end of the room, thrust it into her sleeve without ceremony, exclaiming, 'I'll be damned to hell if I do.' " Finally it was settled that he should receive a ring from Miss Sophy in token of her favor. Tom, being called in, "received it accordingly with sundry scrapes; and, having kissed it with great devotion, put it on his little finger, and strutted off, extremely proud of his acquisition." Here the laughter is surely very near to tears. Nor are such moments rare in Smollett. And to one reader at least they betray a vein of feeling not only quite beyond Henry Fielding's more genial ken, but immeasurably truer and finer than all of Sterne's toying.

I have dwelt upon this finer side of Smollett's prose in order to point sharply (as I see it) the true significance of his poetry. The fact that he possessed in some degree the poetical temperament, and used it in his novels, is, in a word, their saving grace. For without it, what would they be? In his prose fiction, then—his only surely immortal work—it was the poet that was in him that is the leaven of the lump.

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Returns to London (aet. 21), 20; gives MS. of *The Regicide* to Fleetwood, but is disappointed, 20; sets up on Downing street as a surgeon, 20; with Dr. Carlyle when news of Culloden arrives, 21; rumors of Cumberland's atrocities rouse him to write *The Tears of Scotland* (q. v.), 23; patronized by Chesterfield (q. v.), 28, 29; literary fortunes now in a very fair way, 33; publishes *Advice: A Satire* (q. v.), 33 ff.; his friends alarmed by its boldness, 40; writes *Alceste* (q. v.), for Rich, who rejects it, 35; publishes *Reproof: A Satire* (q. v.), 34.

Publishes verses in *Roderick Random* (q. v.), 41; *The Regicide* (q. v.), 16, 42; verses in *Peregrine Pickle* (q. v.), 46; verses in *Humphry Clinker* (q. v.), 69-70.

His quarrel with Lyttelton, 47; becomes chief editor of *Critical Review* (q. v.), 49; *The Reprisal* (q. v.), successfully produced at Drury Lane, 49; involved in severest hack-work, 51; undertakes editorship of *British Magazine* (q. v.), 53; publishes *Launcelot Greaves* (q. v.), 52, 53, 57; publishes poems "on hand" and occasional verse, 53-68; some of latter now first recognized as his, 56 ff.

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